

TOWN OF GROTON
SELECT BOARD MEETING
February 11, 2025

In Attendance: John Rescigno, Tony Albert, Ron Madan and Sara Smith (Town Administrator)

Audience Members Present

John called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

MINUTE APPROVAL

**John motioned to approve the Work Session Meeting minutes of February 4, 2025 as written, Tony 2nd, so voted.
John motioned to approve the Public Hearing Meeting minutes of February 4, 2025 as written, Tony 2nd, so voted.
John motioned to approve the Select Board Meeting minutes of February 4, 2025 as written, Tony 2nd, so voted.**

NEW BUSINESS:

Updates from Public Hearing

There were a few items that came up at the Public Hearing on the Proposed Budget and Warrant Articles that the Select Board wanted to follow back up with everyone on. John wanted to first mention that they do listen to the residents but they cannot make decisions on a what they are going to cut from the budget on a whim. They need to get together, talk about it and make sure that it makes sense to the Town. They are well aware that one day the windfarm may not be here and we may not have that money to offset the taxes. They do pay mind to that and they feel they do not waste money when they are creating the budget. They feel they make a tight budget that is good for the Town taking into consideration the safety of the town and the health of the town. John said he knows he plans on retiring in this Town and he thinks the other Selectmen do too. They do keep all of that in mind. On a final note, they understand that times are tough but they cannot create a budget based on what peoples pay increases are; they have to create it based on what the Town needs. With that said, the following items were discussed:

- The Select Board discussed the operating budget and agreed to keep the operating budget the same.
- The Select Board agreed to change warrant article 4 and only put \$25,000 into the Disaster Capital Reserve Fund instead of \$30,000. This takes \$5,000 off the overall budget.
- The Select Board was not certain on the warrant article for SAU 108. This was to raise \$50,000 to offset some of the taxes if there was a large increase from the school. DRA said that we really cannot do that so that warrant article will be removed and we will not be raising that money. Tony added that since this is a Town budget, not a school budget, we cannot raise money for school purposes. John said the thought was to do this in case there was a large increase and to try to offset it. However, they did keep some extra money in the unreserved fund balance that could be used if we absolutely need to.
- Sara mentioned that between those two warrant articles, \$55,000 was taken off the overall budget that was presented at the public hearing last week.
- Sara mentioned that they reached out to Avangrid/Groton Wind to see if they can start the discussions in 2025 on decommissioning vs repowering and the PILOT. They are waiting to hear back. John said when you look at that, we could meet now to discuss something that is in the future but more than likely he doesn't want to waste his time or ours because there is nothing definitive to discuss right now. Tony said that with the current political administration not liking wind power he doesn't know what that will do about it. Chief added that it depends if they are surviving on federal grant money or not. Tony said they have a producer here. Very seldom are these towers not spinning. He was told that when they are not spinning it is usually because they are an alternate power source so sometimes, they get shut down because the power company will not buy the power. The power would be wasted if they kept them on. John said that at one of the meetings he was at, they said it also has to do with the costs of the fossil fuels. If the cost of the fossil fuels drops at that time, they will shut them down and just burn the fossil fuels. Tony said there are many reasons but they are the secondary source,

not the primary source. John said he watched something on renewable energy and how it doesn't have much value because it is a flat level of power they can give. It really just used as a base or a backup. When you have your power spikes, you have to rely on the fossil fuels and spin the turbines really fast to make that surge they need and then scale it back. Tony said we will meet when we can and find out then. He said he understands Miles' concern but there is not much information right now. Chief said he doesn't think they would tell the Town anything until the day it is going to happen. Sara added that the last time we talked to them, they said at that time there were no plans to decommission and that it is promising for repowering. She added that this could change, nothing is set in stone. If we meet in 2025, that is still three years away and things could change after we meet.

Reminder about Candidates Night

Candidate night will be March 4, 2025 at the beginning of the Select Board Meeting. He hopes that candidates come to speak and that others come to listen. As a reminder, the open positions are:

- SELECT PERSON 1 position for 3 years- Ron Madan
- TRUSTEE OF THE TRUST FUND 1 position for 3 years- open
- PLANNING BOARD 2 positions for 3 years- David Madden and Jonathan Belliveau
- ZONING BOARD 2 positions for 3 years- open
- LIBRARY TRUSTEE 1 position for 1 year- Hilary Coles
- TOWN LOCAL AUDITOR for 1 year- Ann Joyce

School Ballot Information

The following items will be on the Groton School Ballot:

- Article 1 – Election of District Officers:
SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER (3 YRS): Bethany Sharp
MODERATOR (1 YR): Roger Larochelle

Articles 2 and 3 - Proposed Amendments to the Articles of Agreement:

- Article 2: Shall the Pasquaney School District vote to amend Article 3 of the Articles of Agreement among the School District towns of Bridgewater, Hebron and Groton to add two at large School Board members to increase the board from 3 members to 5 members.
(Majority vote required) (School Board Recommends Approval)
 - YES - AMEND
 - NO - DO NOT AMEND
- ARTICLE 3: Shall the Pasquaney School District vote to amend Article 4c of the Articles of Agreement among the School District towns of Bridgewater, Hebron and Groton to simplify the minimum contribution from each town to a minimum of 15 students.
(2/3 Majority vote required) (School Board Recommends Approval)
 - YES - AMEND
 - NO - DO NOT AMEND

School Budget Hearing

John reminded everyone that there is a school budget meeting on Thursday at the Bridgewater Town house at 6:00pm.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

There were no questions or comments from the audience.

Having no other business to conduct, John motioned to adjourn at 7:10pm, Tony 2nd, so voted.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sara Smith
Town Administrator